

REGISTERED INVERT BLOCK FOR THE BOTTOM OF SEWERS.

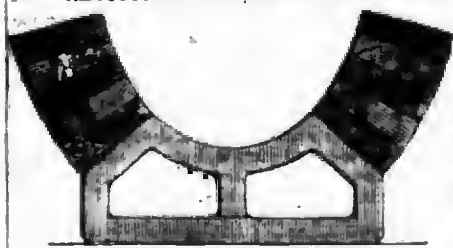


FIG. 1.



FIG. 2.

REGISTERED INVERT BLOCK FOR THE BOTTOM OF SEWERS.

Messrs. Doulton and Co. have recently registered an "invert block," which is intended to form a uniform and permanent surface for the bottoms of sewers and culverts, in addition to making a better foundation for the structure. The sectional elevation, fig. 1, represents the position of the block in the sewer. Fig. 2 is a view of one of the blocks. The concavity coincides with the "egg" curvature of the sewer, whilst the sides are inclined at the proper angle for receiving and supporting the superstructure. The base is level, to afford a good bearing surface, the hollow being to lighten the block, and may be used to carry away the superfluous land-water. The block is made of the ordinary stoneware, and appears to be a very useful application of it.

EPISTOLARY CHAT FROM PARIS.

THE following extracts from a letter I have just received from a friend now at Paris will, I conceive, not be unacceptable; therefore, as I shall not be guilty of any breach of confidence or other impropriety in communicating them to you for your journal, I venture to do so:—

"I have made inquiries," says my friend, "of all the publishers to find drawings and descriptions of the Church of St. Vincent de Paul, but without success. Grimm, the publisher of the *Moniteur des Architectes*, told me that Hittorff, he believed, had given some account of that edifice in his work on Polychromatic Architecture. To obtain a copy of that book was my next employment, for Grimm had it not, neither had Matthias, or any of the others in trade whom I tried. At last I went to the Bibliotheque National, where, on asking to see it, I was informed that, just a few days before, the Prince President had sent for that and several other architectural works, which had accordingly been forwarded to the Elysée. This looks as if the authorities, or rather the authority, here takes a direct interest in architecture, even to the extent of consulting books upon it, and was determined to judge for himself!"

After a good deal more, which I omit, my friend proceeds to say:—"From some conversation which I have had with —, &c. I have every reason to believe that an *exposé* of Ruskin's doctrines would be not a little acceptable to the architectural world here; for even here he has more than one admirer among the superficial or ignorant, who are always caught by clap-trap phrases and chimerical fancies."

That, whatever others may be, the whole of the profession in France, and I should think nearly everywhere else, must be strongly opposed to views which are subversive of present practice and system, and that not in architecture alone, but in various other branches of art and manufacture also, scarcely admits of doubt. In fact, before Ruskinism could be established, a complete revolution in taste must be effected—a species of revolution not likely to happen even in France.

In another part of his letter, after speaking of some private affairs, my friend says:—"To return to matters more congenial to our tastes: I have seen the architectural drawings of this year's *Exposition* in the Palais Royal. What a contrast to the way in which they manage such things in England! The drawings are

hung in a capital and well-lighted gallery,—are not at all crowded together,—nor are any of them placed much above the line of vision. Some of them are quite gems of art. In nearly all cases, too, projected buildings are fully explained by as many plans, elevations, and sections as the particular subject may require. In short, no pains seemed to be spared, but *coa amore* study and diligence are shown. There are several *projets* for completing the Louvre, but I reserve my remarks upon them and several other things for conversation."

The above extract does, indeed, exhibit a contrast the reverse of flattering to ourselves. If it does not reproach us for inferiority of talent, it does for the unaccountable apathy which betrays itself here at home. Our Royal Academy embraces architecture only to smother it; it salutes it, but only with the kiss of a Judas. Yet, verily, so long as it does continue to admit architecture into its exhibitions, it ought to show itself equally attentive to it—equally watchful over its interests as over those of painting; whereas at present the former art may be said to be rather insulted than fostered by it, and to be treated with the most contumelious indignity; which could hardly happen did those R.A.'s who do, or are supposed to, represent architecture in the august body, perform their duty; and—but, perhaps, you will thank me for suppressing, quite contrary to my own inclination, what I do, being very doubtful whether, although I alone would be responsible for it, you would allow me to utter it in *THE BUILDER*. AN ARCHITECT.

LIVERPOOL ARCHITECTURAL SOCIETY.

THE report from the council just now published says,—

"There has been no dearth of communications during the session—many of great practical importance either to the science or the art of architecture. In the former may be instanced the communications from Mr. Elliott, of Blisworth, on the manufacture of vitrified bricks, and of Mr. Chantrell upon the application of fire and other clays to building and sanitary purposes. In the latter, Mr. F. Howard's contributions, and the essay upon the use of the pediment in modern architecture by Mr. Huggins, whose elegant contributions to our professional organ, *THE BUILDER*, have obtained extended circulation by translation into a continental language. Mr. Barry's communication upon the arrangement of union workhouses is also of considerable value, as treating of another phase of professional practice; and the council hope that it may be followed in future sessions by similar descriptions of the most desirable arrangements for schools, club-houses, counting-houses, banks, hospitals, and other buildings. Nor should reference to the several discussions in connection with St. George's Hall be omitted, since your council hope that they have resulted in a practical solution of the difficulty in the position of the organ as furnished in the plan suggested by Mr. H. P. Horner. The proper seasoning of timber is of vast importance, not only in building connected with architecture, but in many other trades also,—ship-building and cabinet-making, for example; and it may be in the recollection of the members that in the session of 1850-51 their attention was drawn to a mode of seasoning timber by its exposure to streams of hot-air, which had been patented by Messrs. Davis and Symington, and which had been introduced into Liverpool by Mr. Gregson, in his extensive saw-mills in Harrington. On the invitation of the company who now own the patent, your council undertook to conduct some experiments with the view of testing the value of this system. For this purpose they appointed a committee, consisting of the president, vice-presidents, Mr. Hay, and the secretary. This

committee report that they have not been able to complete the experiments, although they hope to do so shortly; and your council, therefore, recommend that these gentlemen should be requested to continue their services until their inquiry is completed, in conjunction with Mr. H. P. Horner, who has rendered them considerable assistance. This committee wished to acknowledge the very polite attention and assistance they have received from Mr. Gregson, at whose saw-mills the experiments are being tried."

NOTICES OF BOOKS.

Société Centrale des Architectes, Fondée le 27 Mars, 1843. Bulletin pour l'Année 1851. Paris.

THE objects of the Central Society of Architects in Paris are to offer a point of union to all architects, French and foreign, pursuing either the theory or the practice of the art, to induce amongst them sentiments worthy of their profession; to examine any proposition submitted to them touching architectural practice, art, jurisprudence, &c. and to enter into communication with other bodies established for similar purposes. It consists of about 320 members, including the principal architects of the capital. Candidates to be eligible must possess a stipulated amount of knowledge, have given proofs of capacity and experience, and be in no way connected with undertakings of work (contractors), either as partner, clerk, or designer. It is their practice to refer the processes, propositions, books, &c. submitted to them to a small commission appointed out of their body; and the interesting volume before us contains several valuable reports, the result of this practice.

Mons. Gourlier was the principal secretary last year, and has been succeeded by Mons. C. Daly.

Schools and School-Houses. A Series of Views, Plans, and Details for Rural Parishes. By JOSEPH CLARKE, Architect. London: Masters, Bell, and J. H. Parker. 1852.

IN this volume Mr. Clarke has given plans, elevations, and details, of twelve schools on twenty-five plates, and two other plates showing the arrangements of schools as now directed by committee of council. We say now directed, because the committee appear to have thrown overboard all the designs and regulations which up to that time they had issued for guidance, and without attention to which there was very little chance of obtaining a grant. The number of bad churches, bad schools, bad workhouses, and unhealthy dwellings, which we owe to Government commissioners, the Privy Council, and Acts of Parliament, is distressingly large.

The schools given in the volume before us are at Monk's Horton, Lydd, Little Beniley, Coggershall, Cooperalls, Wellesborough, Brabourne, Boreham, Foxearth, Hatfield, and Leigh. They are mostly of simple character, but fitting and appropriate, and range in cost from 120*l.* to 1,000*l.* and more. The principal schools illustrated are those at Leigh, in Essex, erected by the private munificence of the Bishop of Moray and Ross, but of these there are no descriptive particulars given. We take the following advice from the introductory preface:—

"In woodwork, the gift of green timber should be avoided: rather let it be sold, and invested in sound Memel timber. If well-seasoned oak can be obtained, it is preferable to deal, but not where it is cut in the same spring, or less than three or five years old; but one year of English winter felled oak, before the spring sap rises, is worth years of spring-cut oak, in which every fibre rises from the emptying of the sap arteries, and is so weakened in the grain as to twist, crack, and warp more than almost any other of our native timber. Let all timbers be large enough to be mortised, and not halved, or nailed side by side, depending on their own cohesion. Floors require ventilation under, but not through, opposite walls: if possible, the openings should be on one side to the external atmosphere, and on the other inside the building. The floor-boards should be grooved, and tongued with oak tongues, but not with metal. A low skirting should always run round all the rooms.